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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council unanimously approves Secretary-General's proposal that advance team of up to ten United Nations military observers be deployed to Abkhazia, Georgia, to help verify compliance with cease-fire; team to be incorporated into observer mission if one is established.

+ Co-Chairman of Yugoslavia Conference, Lord Owen, warns against unilateral action by NATO in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bosnian peace talks scheduled to resume in Geneva on Monday.

+ Establishment of war crimes tribunal on Yugoslav conflict proceeding on schedule; General Assembly to elect 11 judges and prosecutor before end of current session.

+ United Nations technical mission arrives in Liberia to arrange for implementation of Cotonou Peace Agreement; border with Côte d'Ivoire to be reopened for resumption of humanitarian shipments.

+ Jubaland Peace Accord signed by Somali factions in Kismayo; covers cease-fire, opening of Jubaland region and reunification of Kismayo.

+ Secretary-General sets up Panel of Inquiry to investigate massacre of Liberians near Harbel on 6 June; Panel will establish facts of incident and make recommendations.

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The Security Council this afternoon unanimously approved the Secretary-General's proposal that an advance team of up to ten United Nations military observers be deployed to Abkhazia, Georgia, as soon as possible to begin to help verify compliance with cease-fire as envisaged in the cease-fire agreement signed on 27 July 1993. It did so by adopting resolution 854 (1993). The mandate of the team is to expire within three months, and it is contemplated that the advance team will be incorporated into a United Nations observer mission, if such a mission is formally established by the Council.

(more)

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The Council said it looked forward to the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed observer mission, including a detailed estimate of the cost and the scope of the operation, a time-frame for its implementation and the projected conclusion of the operation.

In a letter addressed to the Council on 4 August 1993, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had informed its members that such early deployment of United Nations observers could serve "as a significant confidence-building measure by demonstrating the support of the international community for the cease-fire during its initial delicate stage".

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Lord Owen, Co-Chairman with Thorvald Stoltenberg of the International Conference on Yugoslavia, today warned against unilateral action by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He told a news conference in Geneva that it was important for military action to buttress the political process, rather than to drive it. And he stated that on the Yugoslav question, no initiatives should be taken outside the framework of the United Nations.

Lord Owen said substantial progress had been made during the current round of peace negotiations on Bosnia and Herzegovina. He cited agreements on a new constitution, and a proposal for dealing with the three United Nations safe areas in Eastern Bosnia, as well as a proposal on Central Bosnia. The deepest problem, he said, remained Sarajevo, where was still no agreement between the parties.

The Bosnian peace talks are scheduled to resume in Geneva on Monday, according to a United Nations spokesman.

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Work is proceeding on schedule for the establishment of the war crimes tribunal to deal with those responsible for atrocities committed in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, a United Nations spokesman said today. By 3 August, the statutory closing date, nominations for judges had been received from 35 States and the General Assembly would elect 11 judges before the close of its current session. A prosecutor would also be elected shortly, from a short-list of three nominees, whose names the Secretary-General had forwarded to the Security Council for consideration.

The spokesman said that discussions as to the location of the tribunal had been held between the United Nations and the Netherlands, both in New York and the Hague. The financing of the tribunal was also under consideration and was on the agenda for the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

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A United Nations technical mission with humanitarian, peace-keeping and political components has arrived in Liberia to arrange for implementation of the Liberian Peace Agreement signed in Cotonou on 25 July, according to a

United Nations spokesman. The mission will also arrange for the interim delivery of relief shipments to affected National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) territories.

Liberia's border with Côte d'Ivoire border would be reopened to allow humanitarian shipments to resume, provided that those shipments were inspected by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and/or United Nations personnel, the spokesman said. The arrangements were in line with the provisions of the Cotonou Agreement and would be in place shortly.

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One hundred and fifty-two elders and representatives of former warring factions in Somalia today signed the Jubaland Peace Accord in the southern port city of Kismayo, according to a United Nations spokesman. The signing was witnessed by some 500 people, including representatives of Somali political factions and religious leaderships. The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, Jonathan Howe, headed the delegation from the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II).

The Peace Accord deals with a cease-fire and disarmament, the opening of the Jubaland region, the reunification of Kismayo and the restoration of property. It calls for the cantonment of militia forces, vocational training for former combatants, the establishment of a municipal police force and courts, and the deployment of UNOSOM II forces in every district.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has informed the Security Council that he has established a Panel of Inquiry to investigate the massacre of Liberians near Harbel on 6 June, a United Nations spokesman said today. The Panel is composed of Amos Wako, Attorney-General of Kenya; Robert Gersony, a consultant on refugee protection and human rights and a United States national; and Ambassador Mahmoud Kassem of Egypt.

The Panel's terms of reference are, inter alia, to establish the facts and circumstances relating to the Harbel incident; to examine allegations regarding responsibility for the massacre; and to make appropriate recommendations, according to the spokesman. It will make contacts with the Interim Government of Liberia, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), the United Liberation Movement for Democracy of Liberia (ULIMO), the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), and any other relevant individuals and parties. The Panel will begin its work following consultations among its members.

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Correction:

In the Daily Highlights of Thursday, 5 August 1993, the first sentence in the second paragraph on page 2 should have read: "The Secretary-General noted in the letters that the United Nations had total cash reserves of $380 million and monthly expenses of $310 million."

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